Writing an effective research proposal

Berkeley

Office of Undergraduate Research
An effective research proposal has a standard framework

- Statement of Purpose
- Background
- Project Plan
- Qualifications
The **Statement of Purpose** clearly and succinctly defines the scope of the project in 200-250 words.

- Context for research question
- Main problem or issue
- Your Research Question and support points.
- Methods
- Significance or rationale
The **Background** builds the base on which your **Research Question** stands in 1.5 to 2 pages

- What is already known in the field you propose to study?
- What are the limits of what is known?
- How does this logically lead to your **Research Question**?
- *you justify the points of your question with literature review and an expansion of context to empirical frame.*
The Project Plan outlines the main Aims or Phases of your research project in 1.5 to 2 pages.

- Aims/Phases of your Project: action items
  - Aim 1: I will investigate/collect/measure
  - Aim 2: I will determine/calculate
  - Aim 3:

- Methods: describe how you will accomplish each of your Aims/ phases threshold

- Timeline: how long will each Aim take?

- Alternatives/Issues: address possible issues that may arise and alternatives
Your **Qualifications** describe how you are capable and able to do everything you describe in your Project Plan

- What coursework/labwork/languages/preliminary or previous research experience/travel or life experiences qualify you to complete the work you have suggested?
- If you are not qualified, where will you gain the skills necessary or who will you work with that has the necessary skills
OUTLINE
Statement of Purpose

1. S of P. 200-250 words
2. A-context/hook (1-2 sentences)
3. B-Research Question “my research question ask…”
4. Specifically, I will support this or I focus on three points
   a. 1.
   b. 2.
   c. 3.
5. C-Method: “My methodological approach is…”
   a. 1
   b. 2
   c. 3
6. D-Rationale
Outline

• II. Background of research question 1.5-2 pages
  • A.1.
  • a)
  • b)
  • c)
  •
  • B.2.
  • a)
  • b)
  • c)
  •
  • C.3.
  • a)
  • b)
  • c)
  •
  • D.4. Rationale
Outline

• III. Plan

• Aim/Phase 1. Dates and thresholds

• Aim/Phase 2

• Aim/Phase 3